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## Book Reviews.

**The Sacraments of the New Testament.** By REV. J. C. LAMBERT.  
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1903. Pp. 430. \$3.50, *net*.

The preceding volumes of the Kerr Lectures have led us to look for work of a high order in connection with this lectureship, and we are not disappointed in the present volume. Its theme is a vital one, and Mr. Lambert has given it a sympathetic, scholarly, and illuminating treatment. He proceeds on the historical method, and his discussions of the data of the New Testament looking to a formulation of a doctrine of either baptism or the Lord's Supper are sober and balanced. He keeps constantly before him in his discussions the tendency of critical scholarship to ritualistic overvaluation of the sacraments on the one hand, and to depreciation of them on the other. This same critical scholarship has declared that Jesus instituted neither of the sacraments, since Matthew 28:19 and Luke 22:19<sup>b</sup> are both interpolations. Believing that the doctrines of faith should have and actually do have bases in historical facts, Mr. Lambert gives much careful attention to these foundations of our belief.

It was Tholuck's penetrating objection to Strauss's *Life of Jesus*, that he had written it without first making a careful criticism of his sources, and had thus condemned his own work as unscientific. Any thorough work on the New Testament today must take account of the sources from which it expects to draw its data. Mr. Lambert begets confidence by beginning his work with just such an inquiry. He knows, however, how to estimate the mass of conjectural criticism which arrogates to itself the description "scientific," and he rightly judges as completely unscientific the assumptions which have aimed to reflect upon the trustworthiness of our documents by claiming that we cannot "identify the earliest written tradition with the facts themselves," since this tradition gives us simply conceptions and practices in vogue when it was written down. Two New Testament books, because of their bearing on the subject, are specifically estimated—John and the Acts. Regarding John he says: "The more reasonable view is that which regards it as a genuine composition of the apostle John himself, and a work of authentic history, colored no doubt by the medium through which it has passed, but conveying without distortion the substance of

Christ's teaching and the true objective relations in which it was set." Acts is accepted as from the pen of Luke, and as in every way reliable history.

Having thus prepared the way, the author proceeds in Lecture II to inquire into the historical relations and meaning of baptism as instituted by Jesus. At the very outset comes the question: "Is the injunction of Jesus in Matt. 28:19 genuine?" It is virtually the only authoritative word from Jesus for this ordinance. Did He give it? In compact form critical objections are stated and met, arising either from theories of the resurrection (Harnack, Keim), or from theories of the composition of the gospel (Holtzmann), or from the contents of the verse itself (Teichmann, Harnack). Of these, the last are undoubtedly the most serious. The silence of the Acts in regard to the use of the trinitarian formula in connection with baptism certainly needs explanation. Our author explains it by supposing that the disciples did not understand Jesus as prescribing a fixed ritual formulary. A striking parallel is given in the treatment of the Lord's Prayer, which passed into all Christian liturgies, but is not heard once in the New Testament after its original delivery. A strong positive argument is made for the institution of baptism by Jesus, from the difficulty of giving otherwise an adequate explanation for its early and universal observance.

From the institution of the rite, the author passes to consider its historical relations, and he gives us an extended and instructive discussion of the baptism of John the Baptist. It is an admirable piece of interpretation in accordance with the true historical sense. The lines are carefully marked which bound John's conceptions. With the same sense the words of Jesus to Nicodemus are discussed, and if one will learn how to meet the criticism of Wendt, that two hands have been busy with this incident, let him work through the interpretation given here. It will show him how more than one of Wendt's supports of his theory of the construction of the fourth gospel will disappear in the light of penetrating exegesis. The outcome of this whole discussion is that Jesus took an existing rite and made it the symbol of a fact and a relationship which were to be brought about by his redemptive work. The fact was forgiveness, and the relationship was membership in the Christian community. Here we come first upon the declarations of the book which have in view ritualistic misinterpretations of baptism. The author succinctly and clearly shows the relation of *μαθητεύσατε* and *βαπτίζοντες* in the words of Jesus. The real task of the disciples, as they

went forth to execute their commission, was to "make disciples" by preaching the truth and exemplifying its spirit. They were to call men to believe, and, when they believed, to be baptized. Baptism was the symbol of their new attitude toward Christ and his church.

Lecture III is given to a discussion of the general apostolic doctrine of baptism; Lecture IV, to a consideration of Paul's doctrine. Space allows us to look only at the general conclusions of this very instructive part of the book. It is questionable whether an argument for the nonessential character of baptism can be made from the silence of Scripture regarding the baptism of the one hundred and twenty disciples, especially as the baptism with the Spirit is that equipment with charismatic powers which seems to be something entirely different from the Spirit's baptism in conversion (Acts 2:1-5). A careful review is made of instances in the Acts, and in the epistles other than Paul's, and abundant confirmation found of the Lord's conception of the place and import of baptism. It is when we come to Paul that we meet with language which needs most careful examination. Apparently he supports a ritualistic view of baptism: "Arise, be baptized and wash away thy sins" (Acts 22:16). "For as many of you as were baptized unto Christ did put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27). Even such a careful commentator as Sanday<sup>1</sup> says, in view of passages like Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3, that "the sprinkling of the blood of Christ seals that covenant with his people to which baptism admits them." It is doubtful whether the student can find a better, up-to-date study of Paul in reference to this subject. It is painstaking, fair, and conclusive against ritualistic interpretations.

In view of controversial questions, curiosity is awakened as we turn to the lecture on "The Subjects and Forms of Baptism." We expect a scholar's estimate of the facts, and not a controversialist's use of them. These are his conclusions: (1) the words of Jesus himself "do not determine in any direct way the question as to the proper subjects of the ordinance;" (2) "the New Testament contains no direct reference, whether historical or doctrinal, to the practice of infant baptism;" (3) nevertheless, "infant baptism cannot justly be described as unscriptural;" (4) the grounds for it are: (a) the organic continuity of the two dispensations, (b) Christ's attitude toward little children, (c) Paul's language in regard to children of the Christian church, (d) the general fitness of the rite when properly administered. In regard to the form of baptism, his conclusions are: (1) the form of the act is altogether

<sup>1</sup> *Commentary on Romans, in loc.*

subordinate to its ceremonial meaning as an act of symbolical cleansing ; (2) taken as a whole, the New Testament evidence is strongly in favor of immersion, but it gives us little reason to think that the mode is a ceremonial necessity such that the validity of the sacrament was determined by it ; (3) "in the early days of Christianity little importance was attached to the question of a formula, provided it was made clear when anyone was baptized what Christian baptism really meant, and what it implied." The reader must judge for himself as to whether we have here the judgments of a special pleader.

The second portion of the work is devoted to the consideration of the Lord's Supper, and proceeds upon the same method as in the study of baptism. The historical facts are first considered and, in view of recent discussions, the lecture which reviews the facts of the New Testament is of deep interest. Mr. Lambert refuses to accept the judgment of Westcott and Hort upon Luke's text, holding to the *Textus Receptus* ; a position which is seconded by a growing consensus of scholars. It is singular, in view of the general estimates of this gospel, how the testimony of John to the time of the keeping of the Feast of the Passover by Jesus and his disciples is being accepted. Our author joins those who accredit the fourth gospel : "The only conclusion left to us is that Jesus and his disciples kept the feast a day sooner than it was kept by the rest of the Jewish community." He ranges himself also with the preponderance of critical opinion in support of the belief that the sacrament was instituted in accordance with a direct command of Jesus. Having thus obtained his facts, he proceeds to the study of them according to the historical method ; *i.e.*, he seeks "to realize what actually took place and to set the actions and words of the Savior against their proper background of outward circumstance." Here again ritualistic tendencies in interpretations of this scene are constantly in view. He concludes : (1) the procedure of the Supper was essentially spiritual and symbolic ; (2) the thought of the Passover underlay and colored the whole of the proceedings at the original Supper. The significance of the Lord's Supper is summed up in the following : (1) it was designed to be a commemoration of his own death of sacrifice by which the new covenant was established ; (2) it was meant to be a means of communion with Christ and with fellow-Christians ; (3) it was a pledge of Christ's promised return, and a foretaste of fuller fellowship. All these positions are supported by a just interpretation of the acts and words of the Master on that memorable night, and the whole study is worthy of careful attention.

Lecture VIII is concerned with the observance of the Lord's Supper in the primitive church. The vexed question of the relation of the eucharist to the common meal is here lucidly and satisfactorily handled. By keeping apart in consideration the Jewish-Christian and the gentile-Christian territory the discussion is much simplified. In Jerusalem the common fellowship meal afforded the most fitting occasion for the observance of the Lord's Supper. In Corinth the custom of a common meal was, our author thinks, introduced by Paul himself, although the social customs of the Græco-Roman world were by no means unfamiliar with the "common meals" in clubs and religious associations. Among both Jews and gentiles the culminating point of this common meal was the Lord's Supper. It is not until we come to Justin Martyr that we find any clear indication of the separation of the eucharist and the agapé. By Tertullian's time the separation is quite general, brought about in fact by the suspicions of the heathen mind regarding it, and by the tendency to transmute the rite into a "dreadful mystery." From the study of the three passages in 1 Corinthians (10:1-13, 14-21; 11:17-34) we get the doctrine of Paul, and again we are made to see how carefully the apostle keeps from any such interpretation of the ordinance as gives countenance to a "real presence" in the ritualistic sense, or from any such emphasis as makes the observance of the eucharist an essential to salvation.

The last lecture considers the Johannine teaching and later transformations of the Scripture doctrine. The uses that have been made of John 6: 51-58 in the discussions of the Johannine problem are familiar to all New Testament students. If this passage refers to the Lord's Supper, it throws the history into confusion and betrays a later hand. The careful position taken by Mr. Lambert in regard to John's gospel gives him the just understanding of this section. It has no direct reference to the Lord's Supper, and is therefore not out of place historically; yet its figurative presentation of the appropriation of Christ by faith is such that the Lord's Supper is a fine "illustrative commentary" upon it. This admirably states the truth. With the study of this passage the review of the data of the New Testament comes to an end. The few remaining pages of the work are devoted to marking the changes which came upon the doctrine in the ante-Nicene age. The whole presentation is a real contribution to the literature upon the New Testament. It is the book to which one can turn for a fresh, careful, truthful, lucid interpretation of the sacraments.

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